



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

JOINT BASE MYER - HENDERSON HALL

204 LEE AVENUE

FORT MYER, VIRGINIA 22211-1199

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

IMMH-RS

4 Sep 13

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Policy Memorandum RS-1, Chapel Weddings

1. REFERENCES. Army Regulation 165-1, 3 December 2009, Chaplain Activities in the United States Army, Chapter 3-2b (5) and Chapter 12-3h

2. PURPOSE. To provide policy for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) regarding weddings conducted in the chapels at JBM-HH.

3. APPLICABILITY. This policy applies to all eligible individuals who request chapel weddings at JBM-HH.

4. POLICY.

a. Eligibility. Persons authorized to use the chapel for weddings are:

(1) Active duty personnel and their children with valid DoD issued ID cards.

(2) Retired military personnel and their children with a valid DoD issued ID card.

(3) Reserve component personnel serving on active duty at the time of the wedding and their children with a valid DoD issued ID card.

(4) Two exceptions per month are authorized for eligible military or retired personnel with children with no ID card on a first come-first served basis. In this situation, the parents are sponsoring the wedding and are accountable for adhering to this policy.

(5) Regular attendees of any worship service at JBM-HH who are in possession of a valid DoD-issued ID card are authorized to use the chapel facilities.

(6) Roman Catholic applicants. If either the bride or groom is Catholic, the individual must contact the JBM-HH Catholic Pastor and complete a Pre-Nuptial Investigation form approved by the Pastor prior to reserving the chapel for a Catholic wedding. A Roman Catholic application can take several days to process. Authorized personnel wishing to have a Catholic wedding on JBM-HH must adhere to the following:



(a) If asking a non JBM-HH priest to perform the wedding, the officiating priest must contact the Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) at 202-719-3603. He will approve all the paperwork (Pre-Nuptial Investigation Form, Request for Dispensation, etc.). Forms are available under "Resources" at [www.milarch.org](http://www.milarch.org).

(b) The non JBM-HH priest must have his Ordinary/Religious Superior send a letter indicating that he is in good standing in his diocese/religious community.

(c) If requirements are met, the Judicial Vicar will send a "Visum" to the Catholic Pastor at JBM-HH who will then grant the delegation to the visiting priest to perform the wedding.

(d) The Catholic Pastor at JBM-HH will sign the Record of Marriage and send the record to the AMS.

(e) The Catholic Pastor at JBM-HH will inform the Churches of Baptism of the marriage.

(f) Catholics who are exceptions to policy must supply their own priest celebrant for the wedding and do all Pre-Marriage Preparation through their home parish. They must have the permission in writing of their local pastor in order to be married on JBM-HH. If a Dispensation or Permission is required, it must be obtained through their home diocese.

(g) A Catholic who has been married civilly and wants a Catholic Church wedding ("Convalidation") must bring a copy of his/her civil marriage certificate to the JBM-HH Catholic Pastor.

(h) The Army Catholic Pastor assigned to JBM-HH is only available to officiate weddings for Soldiers and Marines assigned to or residents of JBM-HH. Eligible applicants that are in the Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard will be responsible for securing a Catholic priest from their units or Services.

(i) No chapel will be reserved for Catholic applicants until the Catholic Pastor at JBM-HH approves the application.

b. Reservations.

(1) There is no cost for the use of the chapel by eligible applicants.

(2) All weddings are on a first come-first served basis. "First come" is defined as those applicants that have been deemed eligible IAW paragraph 4a above.

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(3) Weddings are not scheduled on major religious days and observances including the Saturday before Easter, the Saturday after Thanksgiving and the last two Saturdays in December.

(4) Weddings will not be scheduled on National holiday weekends.

(5) Reservations will not be made more than one year in advance.

(6) Weddings will not be scheduled to accommodate reception plans made prior to scheduling one of the chapels.

(7) Chaplains, priests, or pastors are not provided by the JBM-HH Religious Support Office. Call the following number for Chaplain assistance.

(a) Army: 703-696-3532

(b) Navy or Marines: 202-433-2581

(c) Air Force: 240-857-2217

(d) Coast Guard: 202-372-4435

(8) Generally, weddings are in the Old Post Chapel (Building 335); however, the wedding couple may request to have their wedding at the Memorial Chapel (Building 480). When a wedding is at Memorial Chapel, that time slot cannot be reserved at the same time for another wedding at the Old Post Chapel; no double bookings.

(9) The Joint Base Chaplain has the authority to close the chapels on short notice for reasons of health, safety, maintenance or military necessity. If this occurs, applicants will be notified as soon as possible. Couples may request to have their wedding moved to the other chapel at JBM-HH on a space-available basis.

## 5. PROCEDURES.

a. Application Process. The application form for weddings is located on the JBM-HH Religious Support Operations website. To access go to [www.jbmhh.army.mil](http://www.jbmhh.army.mil). Click on Chaplains Office. There you will find the wedding application and wedding policy at the bottom of the page.

(1) The application form requires the applicants to endorse that they have read and understand this policy, which is also found at the above website.

(2) Applicants will send applications via fax (703-696-0311) or deliver them in person to the JBM-HH Religious Support Operations office in the Memorial Chapel.

(3) Reservations are deemed final once eligibility has been determined by the Administrative Assistant (and the Catholic Pastor in the case of Catholic applicants).

b. Pre-marital counseling. Pre-marital counseling is strongly recommended for everyone seeking marriage in JBM-HH, and many clergy require pre-marital counseling prior to their officiating at a marriage ceremony. Couples need to understand their clergy's requirements and accomplish them prior to the wedding. Couples may choose from the below options for pre-marital counseling.

(1) Counseling conducted by Chaplains is available throughout the National Capital Region (NCR) through unit and command Chaplains.

(2) Pre-marital counseling is acceptable from any Chaplain or clergy who is in adherence with the couple's faith group.

(3) All Catholics must have Pre-marital counseling, complete a Pre-Marriage Inventory and attend an Engaged Encounter Workshop/Retreat. If one member of the couple has no military background, the couple must be counseled by a couple assigned by the JBM-HH Catholic Pastor to discuss the unique challenges of marrying someone in the military. If both members come from a military Family, there is no requirement for this additional counseling.

c. Conducting a wedding at the Old Post Chapel.

(1) The Old Post Chapel is available for weddings on Saturdays at 1000, 1130, 1300, and 1430 hours.

(2) There will be only one 1900 Saturday wedding scheduled per month. When this time slot is reserved for any given month, the other 3 wedding times each Saturday are at 1130, 1300, and 1430.

(3) No weddings will be scheduled at any other time during the week.

(4) Rehearsals are conducted on Friday evenings, before the scheduled wedding, at 1600, 1700, 1800 or 1900 hours. The purpose of the rehearsal is to practice the sequence of the ceremony only; there is no music rehearsal. Rehearsal times are strictly enforced; if you are late, you will lose that portion of your rehearsal time. For weddings scheduled on Sunday, the rehearsal will be scheduled in one of the time-slots on Friday. No Saturday rehearsals will be scheduled.

(5) Weddings will begin and end on time. The combination of the wedding service and photo session will not exceed 55 minutes. The schedule does not permit exceptions.

(6) The bride may enter the chapel one hour prior to the wedding in order to dress. Thirty minutes prior to the start of the wedding, you may set flowers and seat guests.

(7) Photographers and video recording are allowed but must not interrupt the sanctity of the religious service. Additional guidelines and requirements will be coordinated with the officiating clergy person prior to the service.

d. Music.

(1) Music at the chapel wedding should reflect the sacredness of the wedding service. The music should follow denominational guidelines and liturgical requirements. Visiting organists must be certified by the JBM-HH ceremonial organists in order to play the organs. There is no exception.

(2) Couples may contact the administrative assistant at 703-696-6635 to arrange for the JBM-HH ceremonial organists to certify couple-provided organists.

(3) **It is the responsibility of the couple to pay the organist.**

e. Clergy availability.

(1) Within the National Capitol Region, each branch of the Armed Forces provides wedding coverage for its own personnel. The unit/organization Chaplain will arrange to perform the ceremony. As the wedding services conducted in the chapel are services of worship, only ordained clergy may perform chapel weddings. Judges, Justices of the Peace (JP), or other state certified non-religious agents are not allowed (e.g., non-clergy family members, friends, etc.)

(2) The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all clergy, to include military Chaplains, to be certified by the court to conduct weddings and sign the marriage license. "A minister of any religious denomination must be authorized by a circuit court to celebrate the rites of matrimony. To obtain such authorization, the minister must produce proof of his ordination and regular communion with the religious society of which he is a reputed member." ([http://www.vdh.state.va.us/vital\\_records/marry.htm](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/vital_records/marry.htm), accessed 8 July 2011.)

(3) Valid Virginia certification of clergy must be presented to the Administrative Assistant 30 days prior to the ceremony.

(4 ) It is not necessarily the responsibility of the clergy to choreograph the ceremony. Be sure to ask specific questions about the services provided, including the rehearsal information.

f. Rules for chapel use and care.

(1) Pew decorations are not allowed.

(2) Aisle runners are not allowed.

(3) Candelabras are not allowed. Only provided altar candles are to be lit.

(4) The Old Post Chapel seats 208 people maximum.

(5) The throwing of any items is prohibited inside the chapel and on chapel grounds. The wedding party is responsible for the behavior of their guests.

(6) Receiving lines and wedding receptions will not be held in the chapel facility.

(7) Except for use during communion, the use of alcohol in the chapel or on chapel grounds before and after the ceremony is strictly prohibited.

(8) Furniture in any room in the chapel, to include the sanctuary, will not be rearranged.

(9) Additional items available from the chapel: two candle holders with candles for the altar, kneelers, white silk flower arrangements for the altar and side shelves, a dressing room for the bride, six sabers, and a piano.

(10) Items not available: dressing room for the groom and others, fresh flowers, photographer, babysitting service or nursery, and facilities or supplies for reception.

(11) Due to fire codes, all aisles are to be clear of chairs, musical instruments and decorations. Candles may be used on the altar only.

(12) The chapel must be left in the same condition as it was found. No exceptions. The wedding party is responsible for the clean-up of the chapel, lounge and the bride's room. This must be completed immediately after the bride is finished. The wedding party must provide a set-up and clean-up team with names on their chapel application, to ensure cleanliness for other weddings and religious services within the chapel. All personal items must be removed from the lounge and bride's room before your wedding gets started. If the chapel is left in unacceptable condition, the military sponsor will be contacted and appropriate action taken.

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(13) Sabers. The JBM-HH Chaplain's office issues ceremonial sabers for use by eligible applicants on request on a first come-first served basis. Availability of the sabers will be determined upon the completion of the application process. Eligible applicants must coordinate with the Memorial Chapel NCOIC in order to sign for these items using the DA Form 3161, Hand Receipt. No sabers will be issued for use off of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

g. Requests for exceptions to policy will be sent through the Joint Base Chaplain, to the Joint Base Commander. Address requests to Commander, Headquarters Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, 204 Lee Avenue, Fort Myer, VA 22211-1199.

6. PROPONENT. Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Chaplain's Office is the proponent for this policy. POC is the Chaplain at 703-696-3532 or fax 703-696-0311.



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COL, MI  
Commanding

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